

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A prepared food product for ingestion by mammals, comprising an oxidation-resistant fat-based composition substantially free of exogenous solubilizing and dispersing agents for phytosterols, comprising at least one triglyceride-based edible oil or fat, and 2% to 25% by weight of non-esterified triglyceride-recrystallized phytosterols (TRPs), wherein said fat-based composition has been partially oxidized by an interval of exposure to air and contains a reduced amount of oxidative by-products compared to a similar fat-based composition lacking said non-esterified phytosterols.
2. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said fat-based composition comprises 2-5% of said TRPs.
3. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said fat-based composition comprises 5-10% of said TRPs.
4. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said fat-based composition comprises 10-15% of said TRPs.
5. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said fat-based composition comprises 15-20% of said TRPs.
6. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said fat-based composition comprises 20-25% of said TRPs.
7. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said TRPs are formed by heating said fat-based composition combined with one or more other components of said food product to a temperature of greater than 60°C to dissolve said non-esterified phytosterols, and subsequently cooling said prepared food product to allow said TRPs to be formed.

8. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said fat-based composition is substantially free of exogenous solubilizing and dispersing agents for phytosterols.

9. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is a margarine

10. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is a frying or baking shortening.

11. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is a mayonnaise.

12. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is a salad dressing.

13. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is a filled dairy product.

14. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is a processed cheese.

15. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is a nut, seed, or kernel butter.

16. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is peanut butter.

17. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is a chocolate product.

18. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is a pastry.

19. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is cake.

20. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is a fried snack food.

21. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is potato chips.

22. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is French fries.

23. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is corn chips.

24. The prepared food of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is tortilla chips.

25. The prepared food of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is popcorn.

26. The prepared food of claim 1, wherein said prepared food product is a cracker.

27. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein the oxidation rate of said oxidation-resistant fat-based composition is at least 20% lower than the oxidation rate for the same oil lacking phytosterols.

28. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein the oxidation rate of said oxidation-resistant fat-based composition is at least 40% lower than the oxidation rate for the same oil lacking phytosterols.

29. The prepared food product of claim 1, wherein said oxidation-resistant fat-based composition is heated to a temperature of greater than 100 degrees C.

30. A method for producing a fried snack food having reduced surface oiliness, comprising

frying said snack food in a fat-based composition comprising at least one triglyceride-based edible oil or fat, and 2% to 25% by weight of non-esterified phytosterols.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein said fat-based composition comprises 5-10% of said non-esterified phytosterol.

32. The method of claim 30, wherein said fat-based composition comprises at least 10% of said non-esterified phytosterols.

33. A method of preparing a TRP-containing fat-based composition comprising: heating a mixture of a triglyceride-based edible fat-containing composition, and non-esterified phytosterols, wherein said mixture comprises not more than 98% by weight of edible fat or oil and 2% to 25% by weight of non-esterified phytosterols for sufficient time and temperature to dissolve said non-esterified phytosterols, and cooling said composition to room temperature.

34. A method of increasing the oxidative stability of a heated frying fat composition, comprising

maintaining a fat composition comprising at least 8% by weight non-esterified phytosterols at a temperature of at least 100 degrees C, wherein said fat composition is used for frying.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein said fat composition is held at said temperature for at least 1 hour.

36. The method of claim 34, wherein said fat composition is held at said temperature for at least 4 hrs.

37. The method of claim 34, wherein at least 10% by weight of said non-esterified phytosterols are dissolved in said fat composition.

38. The method of claim 34, wherein said fat composition oxidizes at a rate at least 20% lower than the same oil without said non-esterified phytosterols.

39. A dietary supplement comprising
at least one triglyceride-based edible fat; and
between 3% and 50% by weight of triglyceride recrystallized phytosterols.

40. The dietary supplement of claim 39, wherein said supplement consists essentially of said fat and said non-esterified phytosterol.